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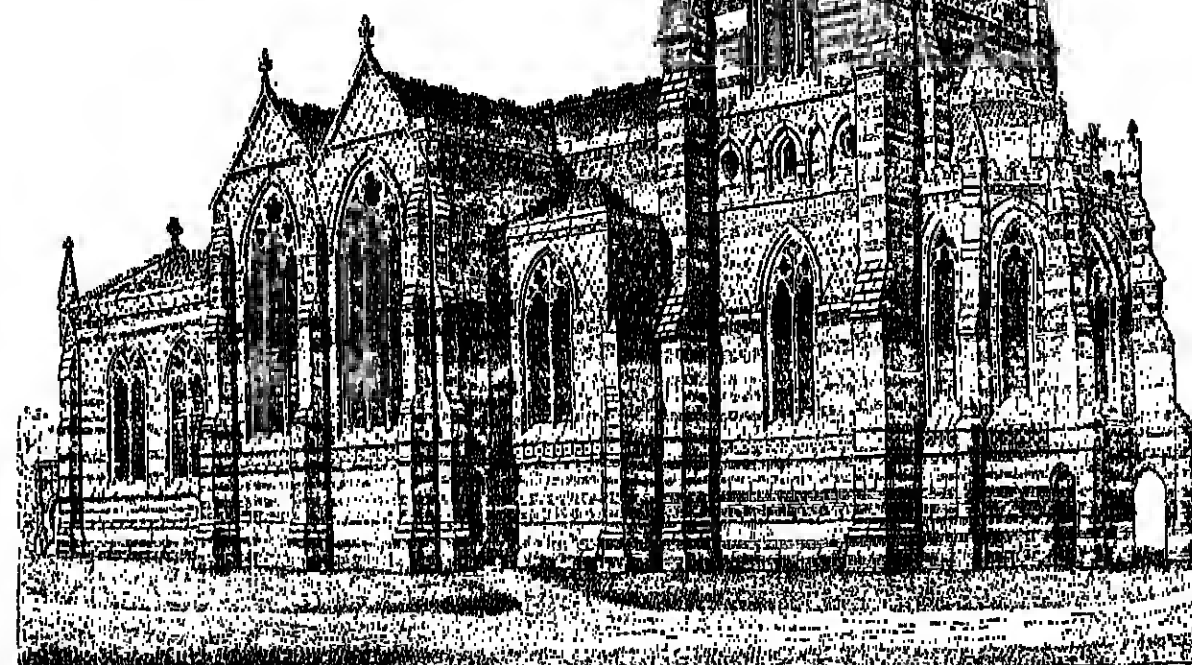
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# Butterfield: most challenging architect of the Victorian style



Ringby School Chapel (c. 1860-70).

Gothic. It is unlikely that we shall truly understand the mastery of Pearson.

Certainly many people have felt challenged, in fact assaulted, by Butterfield's architecture. Dr Thompson has himself had to do a good deal of work exposing and challenging the preponderance of conventional opinion. Jokes about the streaky bacon style and the patent

PAUL THOMPSON:  
William Butterfield  
526pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£10.

and awful ugliness of Keble still have some currency; and in the higher reaches the words which even now, it seems, come first (and automatically?) to mind are "ugly", "brutal", "course", "aggressive".

Sir John Summerson has written of Butterfield's "glory of ugliness", even of his "purposeful sadism"—a "deliberate, systematic, calculated assault on the sensuous qualities latent in the simplest building-forms". Sir Nikolaus Pevsner is a little milder, but to him the interior of All Saints', Margaret Street—that crucial work about which everyone interested in Victorian architecture

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must make up his mind—is dazzling "in an eminently High Victorian ostentatiousness or obtrusiveness... the motifs are without exception big and graceless". If our high priests speak so, it is no wonder if the rest of us reject Butterfield's architecture as the product of a wilful, perhaps aberrant, mind, confirmed in its hatred of beauty by the commercial and philistine society which bred him.

Now ordinary English people have often found it no easier to like such unfamiliar things as the striped walls and columns of Siena, or the intense colour of the Upper Church at Assisi, one of Butterfield's acknowledged models for All Saints'; we admire the frescoes as pictorial art, but a richly-coloured church interior disturbs accepted pieties. Butterfield's use of colour has always been a main target for the hostile: its strangeness is probably exaggerated by our having in this country lost almost all the paintings and nearly as much stained glass from our medieval churches. But still, polychrome brick and stonework was fairly rare in England, and if common enough in northern Italy the more distasteful as being foreign. It is still unusual enough to retain the piquancy of the eccentric. And dislike of particular eccentricities has a way of catching hold and hardening: as Dr Thompson points out, "even Nikolaus Pevsner, confronted by the soft dusty pink brickwork of All Saints', saw instead the 'dark red brick' which the Butterfield tradition demanded."

Dr Thompson offers the interesting explanation of the continuing power of the Renaissance worship of whiteness, but if it was also true that colour "was an assertion of catholicism in a Protestant England, of luxury in the age of Gradgrind, of sensuous pleasures at a time of rigorous suppression", contemporary hostility would hardly need explaining, though its continuance now would thereby appear yet more without rational foundation than we need otherwise suppose. We have at any rate Butterfield's own witness that he intended the walls of Keble to be "grey", the interior of some of his churches "pretty". Is it now possible for the reader to look unbiased at Dr Thompson's small group of coloured pictures, or better still at the buildings themselves, and see whether Butterfield is not—rather than being scorned for discordance or the hatred of "sensibility"—to be applauded for what Dr Thompson calls "the rare brilliance and subtlety of [his] sense of colour", or—another aspect coming into question—for the "exquisite tenderness and beauty" of his mouldings ("an endless pleasure to the thoughtful mind")? Those words come from Warrington Taylor, at one time manager of Morris & Co, a firm whose products and opinions are now much in favour.

There is another large question which must be faced before we can approach Butterfield in a frank and objective spirit, but this is a general issue which has been erected into something pseudo-metaphysical by those who have for so long been bothered over the horny old problem of style. It has for many years been an axiom in some places that Victorian architecture could not possibly attain true greatness because it

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# The sociology of Arcadia

LAURENCE LERNER

*The Uses of Nostalgia*  
Studies in Pastoral Poetry  
248pp. Chatto and Windus, £3.

It is forms and conventions which make literature an institution. A convention in literature is like theology in religion or codes and rules in law—a means of discipline and definition ensuring the permanence of the institution: a received truth, a precedent. Conventions come to acquire a history as they survive from generation to generation, transforming themselves, continually questioned and reformed or re-assured, until so much memory and experience adhere to the convention that it becomes itself a subject for, rather than merely a type of, literature. Pastoral is one case of a convention which has grown from a form into an idea. T. S. Eliot for Renaissance poets the relation between epic and pastoral was more than a matter of form: it involved a debate between two opposed moral ideals; to write inside the convention was to explore the convention's assumptions about life.

Epic was the active form, the mirror of public life, pastoral the form of retirement. Epic trusted to the virtues of will, energy, the self-glorying heroic passion of the wrathful Achilles or the swash-buckling military chiefs of Northern saga and legend; pastoral came to be the custodian of the suffering and selfless virtue of Christianity. Milton's Satan is an epic hero; his Christ a pastoral hero. The convention has become a symbol, an ideal image; its literal characteristics may be metaphorically interpreted, as in Bion's explanation that the shepherd, "by reason of his leisure, rest in a place, and living in view of heaven, is a lively image of a contemplative life". Marvell's Cromwell graduates (as aspiring Renaissance poets hoped to do) from the pastoral of private life to the epic challenge of history.

... from his private Gardens, where He liv'd reserved and austere, As if his highest bliss To plant the Bergamot, to palaces and temples, to become the war's and fortune's son; move will himself in "The Garden" Marvell with cunning irony in the opposite direction, from the vain pursuit of Palm, oak or bay to delicious solitude. Spenser's letter to Raleigh describes *The Faerie Queene* as an epic, a summation of the active virtues which guide Arthur in his quest for Gloriana, but the poem itself relaxes from masculine activism into feminine vulnerability (its main figures are girls, as in Shakespeare's comedies), from martial sternness to pletorial luxury (its main symbolic tableaux are of gardens), from arms and the man to love—from epic to pastoral.

Works of this kind do not simply write in the form, they write about it and the play of Laurence Lerner's book is that he is less concerned with this complex aesthetic life of the form than with rather crudely identifying in the form the pressure of external social forces; for him pastoral is not

so much literature as sociology, and anxiously interpreting the works he deals with so as to disclose various kinds of wishful thinking and bad faith, he belittles them, and in the end makes us think of the convention itself as no more than a species, a self-interested distortion of the truth. Mr Lerner has "seen through" the pastoral, as it were; he has revealed its "message", unveiled the lie it tells about life. The title implies his bias: nostalgia has its uses, it can be cynically manipulated so as to create a fiction which conceals social reality. Mr Lerner's diagnosis follows on from William Empson, who almost forty years ago explored pastoral as a species of proletarian literature; but the abiding value of Professor Empson's book lies not in its sociological description of pastoral as propaganda—this is no more, now, than a 1930s period piece, with the same dated charm as the criticism of Christopher Caudwell—but in the brilliant unorthodox accounts of works like *The Beggar's Opera* or *Alice in Wonderland* (which have nothing to do with courtiers or shepherds) as pastorals.

Mr Lerner, alas, contributes no such novel insights; we have only the social orthodoxy. A much more valuable extension of Professor Empson may be found in John Bayley's *Tolstoy and the Novel*, which re-makes pastoral from the political sphere and takes it to mean "the process of making everything in a work of literature characteristic". Pastoral is characterized which defines an individual in terms of idea, genus, type, and Mr Bayley points out that almost all literature is pastoral in the extent in which it accepts conventions, characters and situation without attempting to see them—at some stage of the creative process—in the mechanistic, inflexible, and unperforated way in which they appear to the seamy eye of quotidian experience.

Mr Bayley's fifteen pages on pastoral in the novel are, it must be said, considerably more stimulating and original than Mr Lerner's entire book.

Pastoral has been studied, by P. N. Fensholt and by Lovejoy and Boas among others, as part of the history of ideas, but for Mr Lerner it is less an idea than an ideology; and one suspects that his political position makes him impatient with the genre, unsympathetic with its fictions and anxious wherever possible to wrench it into contemporary relevance. Hence the inscription of J. D. Salinger and Nathaniel West as pastoral satirists. But classical pastoral appears to annoy Mr Lerner, and he criticizes with his social conscience rather than with his literary sensitivity: thus he dismisses Arnold's comparison of the Sabine countryside under the rule of Augustus with the rural population of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire in the Victorian period by saying "there is no economic history" behind it; he depicts the Lady in *Comus* as a socialist because she scorns the offer of riches, arguing that

Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed In unsuperfluous even proportion Quoting a passage in La Bruyère de-

scribing peasants as wild animals, he notes that

Perhaps only now, when technology has opened up the possibility of an alternative social structure, can we see in the passage a positive, even a revolutionary critique of seventeenth-century society. Mr Lerner's conscience prevails over his taste most lamentably in a short account of *The Winter's Tale*. For him the pastoral of great creating name, the comic rusticity which Shakespeare sets against the tragic sophistication of the court, the Peleete-like rural games which heal the Websterian levers of the early part of the play, are interesting only as a confidence trick, an ingenious mnemonic for avoiding critical implications. He notes approvingly that the pastoral of Act V "sums up, at least potentially, good democratic stuff", but is dismayed to find Shakespeare endorsing the social hierarchy, betraying the democratic pastoral hinted at in Pericles' speech about the sun shining on all alike by revealing that she is, after all, a king's daughter, whose marriage to the prince will not be a subversion of the class system; Shakespeare rather shabbily sets up "a rule that quite clearly stops cottage lasses from getting ideas.... They have to be kept out, and if the argument from environment won't do, then we have in use that from heredity."

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scribing peasants as wild animals, he notes that

The crudity of this range explanation moves one to wonder whether political truth is disabbling for a critic who thinks it closes his mind and tempts him to treat literary works as evidence for his case or as dishonest evasions. Perhaps Mr Lerner's method might have proved more fruitful had he left the Renaissance to more open-minded scholars and considered the flag-end of the tradition in Victorian literature, where pastoral indeed ceases to be a reality and becomes merely propaganda, a consoling fiction. Thus when Sir David Wilkie's "Carriage before Meat" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839, these verses by the Countess of Blessington were printed in the catalogue:

A lowly cot where social board is spread,  
The simple owner seated at his head;  
His bonnet lifts and doth to Heaven argue  
To grant a blessing on the humble meat!

The fiction has become an opiate, softening social antagonisms, gently subduing social inferiors into an acceptance of their position: there are other examples in the organic communities of Disraeli's novels, or in George Eliot's view of provincial life—she turns the flattering idealizations of pastoral into intellectual generalizations, excusing her country-

men (the patrons of the Right in *Silas Marner*, for instance) of their mendacity and their lack of imagination. And her essay on *Natural History of Geneva* is a fascinating instance of a peasant equally subduing the social into the type, except that type is now scientifically, coldly, sentimentally, apprehended.

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The fiction has become an opiate, softening social antagonisms, gently subduing social inferiors into an acceptance of their position: there are other examples in the organic communities of Disraeli's novels, or in George Eliot's view of provincial life—she turns the flattering idealizations of pastoral into intellectual generalizations, excusing her country-

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## PROLETARIAN

# Proletarian patriots

TOR SERGE:

*One of the Russian Revolution*  
Translated and edited by Peter Serfaty  
Penguin, 1955.

For Serge it is convenient to keep the name under which he was known as born in Brussels in 1890, the son of a Russian émigré named Kibalitch, who had served the common cause of Russian nineteenth-century revolutionaries, emigration, grew up in poverty amid the dreams of Russia and which found their full unexpected realization in the differences between anarchy and Bolsheviks, pale into insignificance before the overwhelming of the overthrow of the tsar and the dawn of a new

career and fate were typical of many enthusiastic revolutionaries who gave no thought to problems involved in the birth of a new society. Early in 1919 he fled to Russia to give himself to the revolutionary cause, eagerly sharing the battles and the hardships without and within. He was expelled from the party after 1925, he became an opponent of the Opposition. In 1936, a disillusioned and aged man.

present account of the first time of the revolution, unlike most of the writings, was not based on personal experience, since he was not in Russia at that time. He was published in French in 1946, it was written between 1928 and 1936, before his disgrace and his devotion to Trotsky, the early record of the revolution was still unblemished. If it is to be a record, it is because it was in any way that of record, but because it is little or nothing significant about Stalin. Any suggestions of the future of the revolution were swept in its wake, leaving only a history of the past.

What is perhaps more interesting, however, is the philosophy underlying Serge's account of this critical year: the patriotism of the British expresses

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ties of reflection and synthesis; and the merits of this book are impressive rather than systematic. A history of the first year of the revolution which would sort out the immense diversity and complexity of the events is still to be written. The familiar episodes are retold. More attention, not unreasonably, is given to what may be called the external problems of the revolution—the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the collapse of Germany and the failure of revolution in Berlin, Allied intervention and the civil war, the revolt of the Czechoslovak legationaries—than to its internal evolution. The most interesting points are those arising from Serge's reactions, which were at that time in full sympathy with official views.

It will be a long time before we can hope for anything like an impartial history of the Russian civil war. Serge provides a corrective to the current Western accounts, and portrays, forcefully and accurately the bitterness engendered by Western intervention and by the persistent fomenting of "White" insurrections which would never have got off the ground without it. One particular cause of resentment, to which Serge reverts several times, was the feeling that, after the armistice of November, 1918, Germany and the Allies were covertly acting together against the revolutionary regime. In Berlin the Allies conspired with the German military to defeat the revolution; and in the Ukraine they worked hard to take over the earlier German role as patrons of an anti-Bolshevik puppet government.

Serge argues, not for the first time, that the terror was not part of the original programme or practice of the revolution, and was a reprisal for acts committed by the counter-revolutionary terrorists, notably for the assassination of Trotsky in August, 1918. It is certain that the Allies supported and subsidized men who were known to advocate and practise such methods, and probable that some Allied organizations participated directly in the organization of what was called "individual terror". It is fairly clear that the White armies held the initiative in converting the civil war into a horrifying orgy of mutual massacre.

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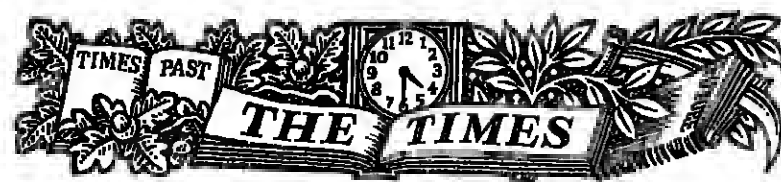
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# TLS

71st Year

6 OCTOBER 1972

No. 3,683

## Viewpoint

BY IAN HAMILTON

A COUPLE of years ago the TLS discovered a young poet called Angus Wildsmith. Angus was not the most prolific of authors—indeed he had only ever completed two short verses. Nor, it had to be admitted, was he utterly original. The two verses in question were entirely made up of well-known lines from other modern poets. Maybe it was the purity of his plagiarism, the engaging openness of his deceit that commended him to our attention: I really can't remember. But whatever it was, we decided that, although his work was not yet sufficiently distinctive to merit publication in the TLS, someone else would surely take it. We therefore encouraged him to reply to a few of these "Poems Wanted" ads that lurk among the Classifieds in most highbrow weeklies, and to try his luck also with one or two anthologies—those with titles like *Poems of the Year, 1972* but with not a contributor that anyone has ever heard of. In such charitable corners, it was felt, Angus's meagre opportunism would not be scrutinized with our own ultra-literary fastidiousness. And after one breakthrough, who knew what he would go on to achieve?

Anyway, off the poems went and sure enough they were instantly accepted by no less than three publishers. The only slight snag was that Angus was expected by each of them to pay for the actual printing of the poems and also to fork out for so many copies of the book when it appeared. At small price, for a young bard on the brink of his career, and he reported his success to us with touching glee. At which point we regretfully decided that a joke's a joke and gave him a lecture on the laws of copyright. Angus Wildsmith died soon after, his bud hideously nipped, and it was by way of a tribute to him that the TLS did finally print his oeuvre and described too the sad history of his non-publication (Commentary, January 9, 1969).

On the surface, just another pigniant tale of fraud meets friend. After the tears have dried, though, one reflects that the really interesting aspect of the whole episode was not that Wildsmith's publishers did not recognize half a dozen of the most famous lines in modern poetry, nor that they—and several others like them—are in business to exploit the would-be poet's lust for publication. After all, they could—and do—claim that they are "performing a service", and that no contributor is left in doubt about how much that service costs. What sets one thinking is rather the scope and fertility of the terrain these merchants harvest. In most vanity-press poetry anthologies there are around

300 contributors, all of them so committed to the idea of themselves as poets that they are prepared not only to cough up but also to swallow their pride—an exercise that ought to produce immediate suffocation in anyone of normal build.

And these "poets" are the rock bottom of a near-occident swell of similarly hopeful toilers—those who build small, secret reputations in even smaller, more secret, magazines, those who are "known locally" to members of their literary guilds, those who lovingly issue their own books, pamphlets, even posters for the admiration of their relatives and friends, and so on. There are thousands of them, and each is in some way or another involved in poetry. They do not buy the *Lancet* or *the Economist*, or subscribe to the Poetry Book Society, and they have probably not heard of George MacBride; they spend their entire creative lives in a shadow-land of genuinely innocent self-regard. One would not want to spoil it for them.

And yet, now and then, one has to. As the poetry editor of this paper for the past six years most of my time has been spent dispensing terse rejection slips (my Rule One has always been: never add an "encouraging word" unless you are prepared to stake your life on it—the ensuing correspondence will destroy you). And the submissions reflect Poetry's (at least) seven types of aspiration. There are the neo-Keatsian Non-Starters, strays mostly from the shadow-land described above; there are the Patriotic Occasionals, the brigadiers and the country gentlemen who break into pentameter in times of national stress and "in lofty tongue" obituarize the Churchills and the Chichesters; there are the Limpid Seasonals, who annually check in with a sprightly welcome to the "thriving green"; there are the Cosmic Healers, who feed you their Miltonic meditations on long hair and "shrill politicians' empty boasts" in serial form, bi-monthly. Oddly (or not so oddly) these, the most amateur candidates, often adopt the most professional type of overture, wielding printed submission slips, or insisting that only First British Serial Rights are available. Indeed the only flaw in their professionalism (the frequent absence of a stamped envelope) is just another sign of their self-confidence.

One gets to know these figures, not just by name but also—at ten paces—by typewriter. And it becomes a real effort of editorial integrity to drag the pained eye beyond line 5 of anything they offer. Even so, one positively prefers their kind of reliability to that of familiar more conventionally literary pages covering letters explaining what they are "getting at" or those

impeccably typed, rice-papered Americans who accompany their bulky manuscripts with minute-graphed credentials ("He has every appearance of developing into a poet of whom it will be impossible not to take notice": Sol Havittoff, Editor of *Unicorn* magazine). Odd and slightly pathetic as the total outsider can often seem, he has the major advantage of not knowing any of the really useful ropes, of never having "met you very briefly seven years ago", of not once having "been knocked out by what Olson sd. abt. this vurry thing", of never having had it off with Havittoff.

Of course, even the seasoned, over-published professionals have their own rhetoric of approach ("Any use? If not, w.p.b., don't worry") and no doubt there is a thesis being written somewhere on The Covering Letter—A Study in the Dynamics of Ingratiation. If there is, let me offer an extract from my all-time favourite (in *passim*):

I was most interested to read that you are looking for poetry, as I write my own. I wonder if you would also be interested, the poem's are all my own work, and are very good—I will give you them, (in rotation)

"Be Still my Heart"

"My Prayer" (For those in Pain everywhere)

"Depression" (very good)

"What is a Friend" (very good and true)

"My Granddaughter Linda" (super? (Everyone Love's this poem.)

"My Mother" (one must read this to believe it.)

I write as I feel straight from my heart, how else can you get through to another person.

Well, she certainly got through to me. In fact, now I come to think of it, Charles Olson sd. something vurry similar abt. this vurry thing too. He's inescapable.

Reading advance slabs of Hunter Davies's book about Tottenham Hotspur (which, even to an advanced fan like myself, seems altogether too packed with those tiny personal details that the advanced fan longs to learn about) reminds me of the mixed feelings I had when it was suggested to me that an easy way of escaping an always imminent insolvency would be to turn my pen to soccer reporting. An attractive proposition: not just to be paid for watching the stuff but to be involved in all that glamorous jostling for the phone, those flowing conversations with Bill Shankly. On the one occasion I did get behind the scenes at a big match, it was a revelation; instead of the usual choked urinals, the plastic cups and the packets of crisps, one found oneself in a sleek cocktail bar surrounded by the three-piece suits of bona fide sweepers. And nearby (the game was played at Wembley) one could see noted managers and television men sipping brandies after what had evidently been a match-long five-course meal. Way down below, the frozen yobboes were squeezing out of exits to catch the last queue home. Another world.

## J. B. Priestley Over the Long High Wall

Some Reflections and Speculations on Life, Death and Time

In a personal and intimate fashion, J. B. Priestley examines the inner world of the psyche, religion, spiritualism, ageing, death and reincarnation. "This book deals with matters of the greatest importance....engagingly autobiographical, scintillating and sometimes excitingly argued." Patrick Anderson, *Financial Times*. Over the Long High Wall was the basis of three radio broadcasts that J. B. Priestley made on BBC Radio. £2.75

Heinemann

and my heart warmed to being even half way to that of spectator comfort. As to writing about it, still not sure. For a start, he Wembley every sat. seriously, there would be of focusing one's body mechanisms on to something actually enjoyed. Having an eminent, and often sports writer hanging about fully behind the goals at a kick about, I could not be of the difficulty of so haughtily critical stance about real footballers. Then he the constant temptation to that, even though you could as well as them, they could as well as you. "Boris Greece when they beat him, might Kinn Greenwood from mired after only two this.... One would have against this kind of thing was that the result might well be to be pure-bred illiterate.

Try reading the following experiencing repeated nausea:

Our two guests got on their fire. After a time they began recollections of the model became so enraptured that they their feet and performed for a variety of acts and a deal. Kinn young, so their animation was glorious. Slicker, wearing a best coat with trousers to match, sat, held out his arm to take line and performed what was a series of high kicks. He dressed as usual, with a flame-coloured shirt, pants and loop-like earings. Her long arms to him and raised and extended a sword until it was almost parallel ground. And together, they rather declaimed, a cadence, tremendous gusto and emphasis.

Another visitor was Mrs. Arriving, slender and trim on day, she peeled off, at the room, out-of-like layers, then a close-fitting jerkin of green then inner skins that seemed salt or wafers of wood, and a slenderness of her own self, though like appreciation of the line, the her steady and uncompromising upon ourselves. Her eyes among their dark lakes, a precious enamel in which a fixed a suggestion of gold and sentient lustre....

Had enough? No, I didn't stop, nor did I horror it for those depressing literary eye which Radin Four have just from the Overseas Service fact quoted from the "fact from English" paper set in year by Cambridge University Examinations Syndicate. The paper is to test foreigner of our native tongue. A subtle of linguistic protection, of impetuous reprisal of some Bloomsbury survivor whose mental holiday went wrong way, let's hope the expanded to his senses and finally marks to those conditions never heard of doesn't



The first plate from the 1591 edition of Harrington's translation of Orlando Furioso.

## Ariosto approached

DOES HAVE their fates. First published in 1591, Sir John Harrington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* went into two further editions in just over forty years, which it was just to see the light until provisionally exhumed by the Centaur Press in 1962. Here it is, a decade later, dressed this time in full academicals, the text set up and supplied with an apparatus of critical, adorned with the hundreds of plates of which Harrington was proud: the *Orlando Furioso* English Heroical Verse for us all, or feared, to enjoy. Hardly, given price, in our studies; but the libraries will have it. What does one may wonder, will it

models of Elizabethan narrative poetry can now get to know this text. No one historically interested in the practice and principles of translation will want to ignore it. It is also the finest of all introductions to Ariosto's great work. The editor, Robert McNulty, is of it "amazing ability to capture in English much of the original quality of the original." That Harrington's is the likely to have, as is certain such things can be. Does it, then, that it provides the way in to the *Furioso*? Or does it very much stand in the way? Of which *Furioso* you have McNulty, Harrington unapologetically captures a great deal.

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO:

*Orlando Furioso*  
Translated into English Heroical verse by Sir John Harrington (1591)  
Edited by Robert McNulty  
588pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.

"Somewhat contrary to its common reputation," Mr McNulty writes, the *Orlando* is a very serious work. It presupposes, as so many Renaissance works do, the course of events in this World as God-directed. To bring about through immense struggles the Christian victory over paganism and in it the destined marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero as progenitors of the house of Este was not mere flattery....

Of Ruggiero's escape from the Circian wiles of Alcina he writes: Though the victory is not yet finally complete, as it rarely can be for fallen man in this World, it leads him back toward Christianity and toward the proper consummation of his love for Bradamante. Victory for the individual, for his marriage, for the state, for Christianity, finally for the will of God Himself are thus all inextricably linked.

This is indeed "somewhat contrary" to the poem's common reputation. What of Ariosto's "pravity" which, Johnson thought, "is generally known" "Where, in this poem of a God-directed world, is the 'gay and gallant' author" of Douglas Bush, the brilliant but finally rather light-weight author of so many critics? Where, above all, is that eye to what Harrington misses.

everyone's irony? It does not occur in Mr McNulty's introduction.

Retouched, the familiar Ariosto is still with us. Thomas Greene, for instance, offered a sophisticated version not long ago in *The Descent from Heaven*, finding in the *Furioso* "the reflexive irony, the unwillingness to see quite whole and quite clear, the capacity to entertain simultaneously more than one thought—those brilliant susceptibilities which have enriched and devastated literature" of modern times. None the less, Mr McNulty's sage and serious (if "by no means unprovokedly solemn") *Furioso* may well be the received text of tomorrow. Our older poetry is now read mainly by professional academics who are above all things historically minded and the *Furioso* envisaged by critics of the past 150 years, whatever its merits, has the defect of being a modern (or nineteenth-century) rather than a Renaissance poem. What fitness is there in grafting a Romantic concept like irony on a sixteenth-century work?

Here perhaps is the importance, for Ariosto, of Harrington's translation. He did his job thoroughly and went to school to the Italian critics and his *Furioso* is by and large the *Furioso* of post-Renaissance Italy, however generously tempered to the obstinate, humours of the Island. How much of Ariosto's text (a good critical edition, this) can the sixteenth-century translator encompass? Are there things there beyond his reach—not just "the superb lyric gift" but the poem's thematic interests, its *diologia*? One way to approach the *Orlando Furioso* is to read it with an eye to what Harrington misses.

Start with something obvious. Every reader has noted Ariosto's apparent inability to keep a straight face for very long. He will, it is claimed, write you a handsome scene and then suddenly pull the carpet away and reveal that he was only fooling. A passage at the start of Canto 4 may provide an example of this doubtful procedure. Bradamante has put up at an inn. Hearing a noise outside, she runs to the window and finds that the host and his servants are all staring up at the sky. Four rather impressive lines present what she sees:

Vede la donna un'altra maraviglia, che di legger creduta non saria: vede passar un gran desier alato, ele porta in aria un cavallero aronto.

A great winged horse carrying a knight in full armour—"a wonder that wouldn't easily be believed...." Joke? We do better to attend to the way the scene is written, to the poet's ability to bring an event, however improbable, bodily before our eyes—what Renaissance critics admired as *l'épique*:

Grandi eran l'ali e di color diverso, e vi sedea nel mezzo un cavallero, di ferro armato luminoso e terro; e ver ponente avea dritto il sentiero. Then a line of almost Danterque gravity and weight:

Calossi, e in tra le montagne immerso— The airborne rider sinks between the hills. And, Ariosto goes on, e, come dicea l'oste le dicea il vero)—

"and, as the host said, and he said the truth, that was a wizard" (that was...). The chattering plebeian tone—and the absurd clucking—conspicuously odd with the rather solemn description of the flying horseman. Here, presumably, is the famous chuckle, the expected let-down. Critic after critic has supposed so, yet in different readings is possible. The vision of the horseman, it may be, is "pleased"; and lowered, by the innkeeper's chatter. And, the innkeeper's ironic sense of things is pleased, and questioned, by the apparition of the great horse. Both ways of seeing have their rights. Ariosto's method is to present an object from point X. He then switches to point Y and the object looks different. A truer point of view? No, merely different, and equally defensible, even though it is incompatible with the previous one.

Especially if it is incompatible with the previous one. For Ariosto likes in juxtaposition styles and modes and makes great use of what might be called structural oxymoron. Now oxymoron does not subordinate one element to the other. On the contrary, the life of this figure depends on the energy with which the two elements confront each other. To do so, they must be scrupulously discriminated and to this discrimination—it may be his greatest gift—Ariosto brings an exceptionally acute control of tone and style, a continuous juxtaposition of modes which at first amuses and then entrances and finally, since it involves conflicting visions of reality, becomes deeply problematic.

This demands a good deal from the reader—particularly since the material often seems so light-hearted. And from the translator. Harrington, neither for the first nor the last time, fails to register the abrupt shift of tone and lets the key moment go with a shuffling couplet. ("The cause of this their wondering and their crying / Was that they saw an armed horseman flying.")

The best approach to Ariosto, however, and to Harrington's dealings with Ariosto, is to glance at some points along the poem's life-line which, pace Mr McNulty, is not the God-directed loves of Bradamante and Ruggiero but Orlando's ill-starred passion for Angelica. The *Orlando Furioso* is a quest poem that presents countless men and women and even animals searching for someone or thing they will not possess or not in the way they expect. Orlando gives his name to the poem because he is the supreme quester; and Angelica, constitutionally unattainable, mutable and elusive beyond the hope of critic's category or lover's seizure, is the supreme object of the quest. Nowhere is the poet so intent, nowhere does the poem exhibit so clearly the vital inconsistency of tone that is its happiest weather, as in the passages that chart the twists and turns of this relation.

Ariosto's practice is to involve this

## Diderot's Letters to Sophie Volland

A selection translated by Peter France

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# The turn of the screws

J. E. THOMAS:  
The English Prison Officer since 1850  
218pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£1.

RICHARD P. L. GERRARD and  
PATRICK H. McANALLY (eds):  
Contemporary Punishment  
267pp. University of Notre Dame  
Press (AUPOC). £7.25.

The summer of 1972 is likely to be long remembered in the British Prison Service, for there has been nothing quite like it in its history. There have been sit-down strikes, fires, prisoners on rooftops in jails as far apart as Dartmoor and Peterhead, almost half the entire population of Albany has been charged with offences against discipline—even the prison officers' wives have demonstrated. The Secretary of the Prison Officers' Association has become a well-known figure on radio and TV, and *The Times* has deliberated on its leader page twice in one week. The Home Secretary was obliged by prison troubles, no less than the Ugandan Asian question, to cut short his summer holiday.

Even before the events which led up to the inquiry into prison security by Lord Mountbatten, in 1966, members of the prison service, and informed observers of it, have been talking of a growing crisis. It has been a crisis of numbers, and a crisis of control. For though escapes have diminished since the new security measures which followed Mountbatten's report, the problems of control have grown, some would argue as a direct result of the new measures, which diverged from Mountbatten's recommendations in one important detail, namely that in place of a single secure prison for the high risk "Category A" prisoners, there has been a dispersal of them, following the advice of the committee chaired by Professor Leon Radzwinowicz.

This summer the prison officers have talked freely, as never before, to the press about a loss of control. Their views are straightforward. Pressure of numbers and the dispersal policy have made control infinitely more difficult, while the Home Office has taken a soft line against those who infringe the prison rules by open acts of indiscipline. There can be no denial that things have got worse, especially for the compliant prisoner in the local jail, for whom increased security—which he does not need—has meant firmer restriction, longer sentences, and an increase in "lifers" since the abolition of the death penalty, have also contributed. And in spite of its obvious risks of continuation, only the Government, and *The Times*, seem still committed to the dispersal policy.

Meanwhile a new dimension has been added to the problem. A new body, *Prison (Protection of the Rights of Prisoners) Ltd*, has made claim to be the official prisoners' union, and has demanded official recognition. Unlike the long-established Howard League, or even the newer *Rap (Radical Alternatives to Prison)*, *Prison* actually claims membership from those presently behind bars. For the unformed staff, these manifestations are no more than yet another contest of wills with their legitimate authority, and as such are novel only in so far as they seem planned, systematic, and uncommonly widespread. For the Prison Department of the Home Office they are a grave embarrassment, diverting the energies of administrators from the task of building up the stock of new prison places and keeping the antiquated Victorian bastilles from falling down. For public opinion, the present troubles may represent a sharper focus for hostility towards deviants and law-breakers for whom it is widely held, modern methods of pedagogy offer no more than a coddled existence at the long-suffering taxpayers' expense.

It has, indeed, been a summer of discontent. Sociologically, one cannot consider apart the public reaction to the violence of striking

dockers—certainly those who have kicked unconscious policemen—and the reaction to those who, having violated the rights of others by committing crime, now use the word "strike" to describe their protests in support of what they claim to be their rights as prisoners. It is not simply that there have been specific and noteworthy instances of revolt; public opinion, certainly since the crop of student disorders in the past few years, has become increasingly sensitive to the fact that in the contemporary world dissent against established authority is increasing. And while attempts to control the dockers by increasing some of their leaders have proved futile, so too, it could seem, the criminal classes cannot be controlled, even behind prison walls.

It could of course be argued that Britain today is no more troubled by dissent than the Britain of a century ago. The Victorian middle class, for all its purported self-assurance, was disturbed by bomb-carrying Irishmen, striking dockers, and crime on the streets. But there was an essential difference, in that the agencies of social control were never successfully challenged. No mutinous prisoner ever overcame the iron instrument that was the prison system ruled over by Major-General Sir Edmund Du Cane. Irish bombers died on the gallows, and the mutins were dealt stunning blows in the courts. And at lumber levels the stern discipline of the elementary schoolmaster contained the kinds of behaviour which now form the substance of so much of the business of the modern juvenile court.

The prison situation, though in a sense it may appear marginal compared with other graver social issues, is important in that it represents a social paradigm. Order in society depends upon consensus, but where that fails there must be some form of coercion. Since the ending of capital punishment and the retirement of the cat and the birch, prison is now the ultimate coercive device. The English Prison Officer since 1850, despite its title, deals in some detail with this theme. As a former Assistant Governor and Tutor at the Prison Staff College at Wakefield, J. E. Thomas writes with an inside knowledge of the events of recent years. Much of what he says will not endure him to some at "Head Office", but only because they know only too well what he means. He says it, moreover, much better than some of the more strident voices inside the Prison Officers' Association which are an often-prone to hyperbole that undermine civil servants have been able to dismiss them without losing sleep.

This is essentially a book about the history of prison administration. As such it is sociologically unimpeachable, but that is nothing new among writers on social administration, who make as many assumptions themselves as they claim to furnish the objectivity of sociologists. Nevertheless, the book breaks a lot of new ground; more important, it presents the problems of today in a context which is not so much historical as timeless. Dr Thomas shows that Mountbatten's recommendations have brought the wheel full circle to where matters stood before the Gladstone Report of 1895. But there is no Du Cane at the helm. Dr Thomas's attempt to rehabilitate that remarkable figure, vilified by almost every prison historian down to Sir Lionel Fox, is less than successful. There is good contemporary evidence to support the view that Du Cane in his declining years was, in common parlance, an absolute larder to his subordinates.

In Dr Thomas's view the efficiency of a prison system is measured by its control over prisoners. Reform is something which has been added by socially-conscious outsiders with disastrous results for the prison system. This is certainly how society sees the problem, but Dr Thomas shows, and convincingly, how over the years since the Gladstone Report the prison administrators have become increasingly committed to reform at the expense of control, how Governors and Commissioners alike have become prisoner-orientated, and how the men in blue have become progressively alienated. He shows how, even when the staff made a desperate attempt to rid themselves of role-confusion and status-loss by demanding a "therapeutic" role—as they called for in their Memorandum of 1961—they have been by-passed in favour of specialists like welfare officers.

Some aspects of Dr Thomas's analysis are ingenious. Citing the Dartmoor Mutiny of 1932, he reasons that the combination of escapes is a safety valve in the closed prison and that, alternatively, increases in perimeter security combined with greater freedom within the walls could thus be why, in the Paterson era, there were so few serious troubles. It certainly he shows that Paterson's charisma put its own way everywhere. But this year's troubles, apart, the Parkhurst riot of 1970 was the worst thing since the men in the hulks rose in the 1850s. And, prophetically, Dr Thomas expects more trouble if the emphasis on security remains and the policy of dispersal continues.

Dr Thomas is less forthcoming on the subject of the post-Mountbatten period. He does not deal in any great detail with the way in which the advocates of dispersal prevailed over Mountbatten's advice; still less with the almost way in which the Treasury mandarins blunted Mountbatten's other key proposal, for an Inspector General with direct access to the Home Secretary. That post has been downgraded to that of Chief Inspector, subordinate to the career civil servant who chairs the Prisons Board. Thus of the three great hopes that Mountbatten gave to the uniformed staff, concentration, an Inspector General, and a new intermediate rank, only the last has materialized. The picture which Dr Thomas paints is a gloomy one. Staff alienation is unlikely to be assuaged, even by a tough line on the present disorders, for if the numbers of Paterson's light horse, as his admirers were pejoratively known, are now fewer, the ideology that was given substance by his efforts remains massively unmoved.

Dr Thomas suggests that society has a choice, between repressive and reformative prisons, and notes the comparative costs. But in a sense society has already chosen. The *hampshire* is behind a variety

of leaders, is sick of the pompous demonstrations, anti-strike, strikes, and crime. Society is that very few indeed who will pontificate in the months on the subject of crime. Punishment will get near their least reader on *Contemporary Punishment*. For one thing to be prohibitive; for another it is avoided by all those for whom thought is a dangerous activity. It ends the base of single national preconception. It is one of the best selections of writing on the subject of crime and punishment at present in print. Objective, in that its conclusions range from Karl Menninger's *Lewis*, and includes such such J. D. Mahabhatt's article from 1949. It is certainly a book that Barbara Wootton and Pius XII appear in the same way. It is a book which, though likely to be confined to one bookshelves, should be prescribed texts for undergraduates in the social sciences, for many "readers" from the States have the consensus of actual portage, this one-sided

the way to the stars  
J. A. WHITNEY:  
The way to the stars  
Angus and Robertson. £3.50.

books on cosmology are full of detail. It is a real pleasure to read a book such as this one by Whitney of Harvard, who himself to one theme only—discovery of the nature of the universe which our Sun forms but can. The main purpose of the book is to explain the apparent movement of the planets among the fixed stars of this was changed until the sixteenth century, but even the solar system of Copernicus and the multiplicity of circles in the ancients were essential to the perfection they sought. Kepler, a curious mixture of religion and scientific ideas, rejected the circles by ellipses and, with that contemporary Galileo, the way for the rigid formulae of Newton.

Whitney gives few biographical details of these astronomical pioneers, but he is at pains to make comments on their attitudes to many "readers" from the States have the consensus of actual portage, this one-sided

the Far of Rome had built the great telescope with which he was able to detect the spiral structure of many of the nebulae. Astronomy now entered a new phase with the development of photography and spectroscopy analysis. Huggins found that the light of some of the nebulae was that of a glowing gas, while the spirals showed the familiar continuous spectrum of starlight.

Measurement of the distances of these bodies still eluded astronomers, but in 1920 Shapley, using the newly built 100-inch telescope at Mount Wilson, was able to measure the size of the Galaxy. The Sun was then found to be far removed from the centre, and the anthropocentric view of the universe was dispelled once and for all. A few years later Hubble, using the same instrument, began his study of the distant nebulae, and was able to fix the distances of many of the spirals, which were not only far outside our system but

## Science in the garden

JOHN TAMPION:  
The Gardener's Practical Botany  
216pp. Newton Abbot: David and Charles. £2.95.

Botanical study and gardening expertise do not always go together so it is particularly fortunate that John Tampion, a trained biologist with green fingers, knows how to present the main principles of plant growth in simple language. He examines the scientific reasons for familiar gardening practices and shows that it is better to try to understand and work alongside nature rather than "meet it in a head-on clash".

He devotes his first three chapters to the needs of the plant, with special emphasis on growth substances and on the physical and chemical nature of the soil. Practical information on the construction and use of the compost heap is followed by a consideration of the environmental factors which affect growth and the way they can be used to advantage, as for example, by correct pruning, disbudding and "pinching out". Modes of propagation are discussed and ex-

plained, whether by fertilization and seeds or by the many forms of vegetative propagation, both natural and induced. The use of growth retardants as well as growth promoters is demonstrated, together with the use of auxins.

Modern practice lays great emphasis on day-length and the influence of temperature on flowering and fruiting, matters of commercial importance. Recognizing that a good gardener has to care for his own plants and protect them from enemies "over the hedge", the author describes methods of weed control and the value of good husbandry. Some environmental control can be exercised by the use of greenhouses, frames and cloches and a concluding chapter discusses plant breeding and the mechanism of inheritance.

Clear illustrations and a well-arranged bibliography complete a book which will be of great value to gardeners who may not have had an earlier opportunity of studying the application of modern science to their familiar skills and to whom much of the new research on growth and development has been inaccessible.

## Highland ornithology

WATSON:  
Highland Ornithology  
37 plates. Edinburgh:  
Academic Press. Distributed  
by W and W. £5.50.

presence of this long-awaited book will give pleasure to many north of the border, where Donald Watson established his reputation as a leading bird-watcher. His book is a breath from the old days when bird-watching was concentrated on the birds, their lives and their habits, and it shows Mr Watson in his role as a good writer, too. In his introduction he says that the book is a sentence of the introduction to a very "personal book", as he calls it. It is the book's charm, for Watson has been able to capture the birds' world and the environment in which they live as only an observer strongly developed artistic love of nature could do.

Personal anecdotes are never boring and the part of the book devoted to descriptive matter is the side of briefly with the thirty-odd lines of appearance, habits, food, voice, and the result of long hours of observation. The book is a Galloway home or in the Hebrides, painting a picture of the birds.

Watson pays a well-deserved tribute to the three outstanding Scottish ornithologists from whose writings he has drawn so much material. The book is a Galloway home or in the Hebrides, painting a picture of the birds.

was reviewed here on August 20, 1971; and Adam Watson, an authority on grouse and ptarmigan.

Experienced readers will not be disappointed with the twenty-four full-page colour plates and fourteen monochrome, which have been well reproduced by Hisslop and Day of Edinburgh with their usual care. If in one or two of the backgrounds, the water is of an almost unbelievably vivid hue, we may allow an artist's licence to make a telling picture. One or two of the plates have a sunburst effect in contrast to the clear definition of the others—but all the backgrounds are bound to evoke happy memories for those

## Many and small

HERMANN HEINZEL, RICHARD FITTER, JOHN PARLOW:  
The Birds of Britain and Europe  
With North Africa and the Middle East  
320pp. Collins' £1.50.

The economically minded bird-watcher travelling in Europe and Western Asia, the Atlantic Islands and the Mediterranean will find it frustrating in colour in this book all the birds he could ever hope to see in such a vast area. The Polish artist Hermann Heinzel is responsible for the mainly excellent illustrations.

The text consists of little more than the main distinctions required for identification, with brief observations on voice and habitat. This section has been prepared by Richard Fitter

who know what Scottish scenery can offer.

One irritating feature is the way many pictures are divorced from the text they are intended to illustrate. To give just one example, the essay on the peregrine falcon is illustrated with a full-page plate of a peregrine and with another of a merlin. The peregrine plate appears in the middle of the text on the hen-harrier. Technical difficulties may be the cause of this, but it does detract from the otherwise high standard achieved. Nevertheless, *Birds of Britain and Europe* should be in the library of every naturalist in Scotland and beyond.

## Paperbacks

Biography and Memoirs  
Leigh Bouhem: *Hand Me Down*. (Pan, 35p.)  
Vivienne Leduc: *Maid in Paris*. (Panther, 40p.)  
George Lukacs: *The Young Lukacs*. (New Left Books, 60p.)  
Ian McNeil: *Joseph Hume*. (David and Charles, £1.25.)  
Phyllis Aylward: *A London Sparrow*. (Pan, 35p.)

Drama  
Robert G. Lawrence (ed.): *Early Seventeenth Century Drama*. (Everyman, 45p.)  
Maurice Maugham: *As Time Goes By and Black Pudding*. (Caldor and Boyce, £1.)

Fiction  
René Barjavel: *The Ice People*. (Mayflower, 35p.)  
Samuel Beckett: *How It Is*. (Algon Books, 35p.)  
R. D. Blackmore: *Springhaven*. (Everyman, 45p.)  
Richard Brautigan: *Trout Fishing in America*. (Picador, 40p.)  
Angela Carter: *Love and Vilnius*. (Picador, 40p.)  
David Cante: *The Occupation*. (Panther, 40p.)  
George MacDonald Fraser: *Flash Gordon*. (Pan, 35p.)  
Hermann Hesse: *Knulp*. (Picador, 40p.)  
Frederick R. Karl and Leo Hamalian (eds): *The Naked Eye*. (Picador, 60p.)  
Jack Kerouac: *Desolation Angels*. (Panther, 40p.)  
Adrian Mitchell: *The Bodyguard*. (Picador, 40p.)  
Don Mitchell: *Thump Thumping*. (Panther, 40p.)  
Robert Smith: *Jorjacks*. (Panther, 40p.)  
John Updike: *Love and the Blackbird*. (Picador, 40p.)  
Peter White: *The Lure*. (Picador, 40p.)  
Monique Wittig: *The Guérilla*. (Picador, 40p.)

## CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS

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Preface by Walter Allen.

CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS is vol. 2 of the series *Contemporary Writers of the English Language*; vol. 1, *CONTEMPORARY POETS*, is now available; vol. 3, *CONTEMPORARY DRAMATISTS*, will be published in June 1973. Thereafter, each volume will be revised every three years.

CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS SBN 900997 125  
October 1972 L C 75-189694  
XVIII, 1450 pages £9.00

ST. JAMES PRESS  
1a Montagu Mews North  
London W1H 1AJ

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS  
175 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10010

## Four days on, three days off

RIVA POOR (Editor):  
4 Days, 40 Hours  
Reporting a Revolution in Work and Leisure  
Foreword by Paul A. Samuelson  
298pp. Pan. Paperback, 75p.

The first significant introduction of a five-day working week was at the American Ford Motor Company in 1908. Before that workers nearly everywhere had a six-day week. Some had already secured a five-and-a-half-day week and an unfortunate and exploited few still worked more than six days a week. Even as late as 1929 only 5 per cent of Americans had a five-day week, and in Britain virtually no one had less than five-and-a-half days. Today there are already some thousands of companies in the United States and a few elsewhere which have introduced a four-day working week.

In 1970 Riva Poor, an American management consultant who had herself owned and operated several small businesses, made a survey of the four-day system. *4 Days, 40 Hours* created something of a stir in the United States, revealing that a number of American companies had successfully introduced a four-day week with benefits both to management and to labour. The majority of

these companies claimed that the changeover had resulted in higher productivity, easier recruitment, a morale in incentives, and better morale among employees. Only a very small minority had abandoned the innovation—usually not because it had proved unproductive or unpopular with the workers, but because it had created difficulties for customers. Mrs Poor has now produced a "British edition" of her pioneer survey. It includes an examination by Theo Richmond of the impact so far of the four-day system on Britain and Australia.

The four-day week does not necessarily mean that actual hours of work are reduced. Mrs Poor addressed herself particularly to the possibility of rearranging the work-week so that forty hours' work are spread over four days. Significantly, workers have usually been more favourable to the idea than the unions. In the British motor-car industry, for example, the employers introduced the four-day week at the time of week, that in both night work and spread over five shifts. The effect, voted with their feet. They refused to work five night shifts and instead insisted on a longer

shifts. In the end the employers and the unions had to accept the verdict of the rank-and-file, and four night shifts is now the common working week in Midlands car factories.

Except for nightworkers in the motor car industry, however, the four-day week has so far made little progress in Britain. There is not much doubt, on the basis of the American evidence, that it could be introduced with advantage in many more places. But employers fear that a four-day week would be accompanied by claims for reduced hours and would lead to increased costs, and unions have been reluctant to endorse any arrangement increasing the length of the working day ever since the fight for the eight-hour day.

Nevertheless, there are strong arguments for a four-day forty-hour week. The attraction of a three-day weekend is strong, and many people would welcome a new arrangement which would provide them with more leisure. Even if actual working hours are not reduced, less time is spent travelling to and from work, and so on. Of course the four-day worker might take a second job, and become, in American terminology, a "moonlighter". But is this really a danger? Some American employers who have introduced a four-day week do not object to their workers

taking a part-time job on one more of their days off, and that a change can be as good as rest and that, in any case, it pays the worker with higher earnings to take a second job.

Unions will not accept these arguments. They have always feared that a reduction in the working week should mean a reduction in the leisure of all workers. If it is true that there would not have been a significant increase in overtime pay, Britain to accompany successive reductions in the working week may not eventually ride the workers, and they will have less free time if the four-day week is accompanied by some reduction in their eight hours.

In the United States the four-day week has been introduced by a number of companies. It is not yet a new innovation, but it is making its way in Britain. It will probably depend on the initiative of management. So far little has been heard of it in this country, but more will soon be heard of it.







